Amendments to the Specification:

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 15, line 9, with the following redlined paragraph:

The extension can be made by mapping each element of $GF(p^r)$, which appears in the starting matrix, in the corresponding element of the extended field. The correspondence between the elements of the two fields is expressed in the representation of $GF(p^{rs})$ on $GF(p^r)$, alongside which is to be set a representation of $GF(p^{rs})$ on $GF(p)$ $GF(p^r)$, which enables the performance in p-ary logic of the operations of encoding and decoding.